

NEWS BRIEFS

Informational Newsletter for Wyoming Hospitals

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June 8, 2012

WHA Calendar:

WHA Board of Directors Meeting
Casper, WY **7/16**

Annual Meeting & Convention
Little America
Cheyenne **9/26-9/27**

Other Events:

Western Regional Trustee Symposium
Big Sky, MT **6/13-6/15**

Western Region Flex Conference
Park City, UT **6/14-6/15**

Health Department Outlines Input Process for Medicaid Study

The Wyoming Department of Health has developed the process it will use this summer to gather input from Medicaid providers about ways to control spending in the Medicaid program.

That effort comes as the Department works to complete its Medicaid Options Study, which was authorized by the Legislature as a way to identify methods to control Medicaid costs while continuing to deliver high-quality care to Medicaid recipients.

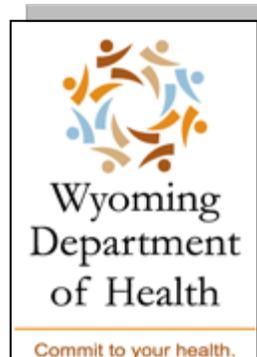
Department officials recently presented the first phase of the study to legislators. The first phase focused on the creation of a database that allowed the Department to mine for cost drivers and trends.

The study identified the most expensive areas of Medicaid spending, broke Medicaid recipients into key categories, and then analyzed their costs per person, as well as the increases in spending over a three-year period.

The next phase of the study will focus on collecting input from provider groups across the state about how to modify the Medicaid program.

During a meeting with healthcare associations last week, Department officials outlined the process it will use to collect that input.

The process will begin with a series of web-based interviews the Department will conduct with staff at the Department of Family Services and the Department of Health.



Following that step, the Department will interview no more than two representatives from each Medicaid provider group. From those interviews, the Department will compile key themes that will be revealed during focus group sessions that will be convened in July in August.

Those focus groups are expected to be held in five locations around Wyoming.

The Department of Health will then prepare a report of provider input that will be provided to the Joint Labor, Health, and Social Services Committee in time for its September meeting in Lovell.

Lastly, the Department will deliver its final Medicaid Options Study report to the

committee by December.

Phase I of the study indicated that developmental disability waivers, hospitals, nursing homes, and physicians, in that order, were the most expensive Medicaid provider groups. Within those groups, the blind, aged, and disabled were the most expensive, averaging \$23,454 per person.

The study also revealed that 5% of Wyoming's Medicaid recipients drive about 52% of the program's costs. Department officials have suggested that that small group should be the focus of cost control efforts, since the largest group of recipients drives a much smaller portion of spending.

For example, the top 5% costs about \$69,659 per person per year, while the bottom 80% of recipients costs about \$1,431 per person per year.

Committee members have suggested that potential causes of increased Medicaid costs include general medical inflation, 'outliers' in the Medicaid program such as premature babies and burn victims, and the fact that advances in medicine enable providers to deliver more expensive, life-saving treatments that were not previously available.

The Wyoming Hospital Association will continue to monitor the Medicaid Options Study and stakeholder feedback process.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



West Park Hospital Completes Modernization Project

A \$25 million modernization project at West Park Hospital opened for use last week.

The project, phase II of the hospital's facilities master plan, adds more than 110,000 square feet of new and renovated space, while setting the stage to implement phase III of the project.

The modernization phase was completed on time and \$1.2 million under budget.

Major changes to the hospital include radiology and lab departments, a new hospital entrance, patient financial services, a chapel, a gift shop and an emergency room.

The new ER will serve as a visible access point to the hospital, and will be located next to the new radiology and lab departments, which will aid in quick service in the ER.

The new ER also enables WPH to double its capacity from 6,000 to 12,000 ER patients annually. The change will be welcome since the hospital was operating at a third beyond its capacity in the department.

Phase III of the project, which will primarily flesh out the newly added second floor, is expected to be complete within three to five years.

Don't forget to send us a story about your hospital so we can feature you in our Member Spotlight



Steve Erixon

Lander Regional Hospital Names New CEO

Lander Regional Hospital (LRH) has hired Stephen M. Erixon, FACHE, a veteran hospital administrator with more than 30 years of concentrated healthcare experience, as its new chief executive officer.

Erixon took over on June 4, replacing Rebecca Brewer, who has served as the interim CEO since November.

"We are fortunate to have someone of Steve's caliber of experience and

expertise leading Lander Regional Hospital into the future," said Don Bivacca, president of the National Division of LifePoint Hospitals® of which LRH is a part. "He has a proven track record of success in driving quality improvement, building strong relationships with physicians and staff, expanding service lines, and growing market share."

Erixon came to LRH from Rainy Lake Medical Center in International Falls, Minnesota, where he has

served as interim CEO since January 2011. Previously, he was president and CEO of Skaggs Regional Medical Center in Branson, Mo.; president and CEO of Baxter Regional Medical Center in Mountain Home, Ark.; CEO of Memorial Mother Frances Hospital in Palestine, Texas; and CEO of Columbia Bay Area Medical Center in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Erixon holds a Master of Health Administration degree from Duke University.

Department of Health Offers Free EHR

The Wyoming Department of Health, in partnership with Medical Informatics Engineering, a web-based, Minimally Invasive™™ electronic health record (EHR) provider, is offering a free, fully certified EHR to any and all Medicaid providers in Wyoming.

Wyoming is the first state to do so.

MIE's WebChart EHR will help providers in the

state demonstrate meaningful use and qualify for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) incentives while also helping their practice, and the state, improve patient care.

"Initially, we had a limited EHR adoption rate in Wyoming because many of our physicians come from small to mid-sized practices and were unable to find a cost effective and efficient

EHR solution that wouldn't disrupt workflow," said Dr. James Bush, Medical Director of the Wyoming Department of Health.

The free EHR initiative began in early 2011 and was rolled out slowly to Medicaid providers across the state. To date, the state has over 36 providers, 16 practices and over 31,000 patients registered in WebChart EHR from MIE.

Wyoming Hospital Association

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